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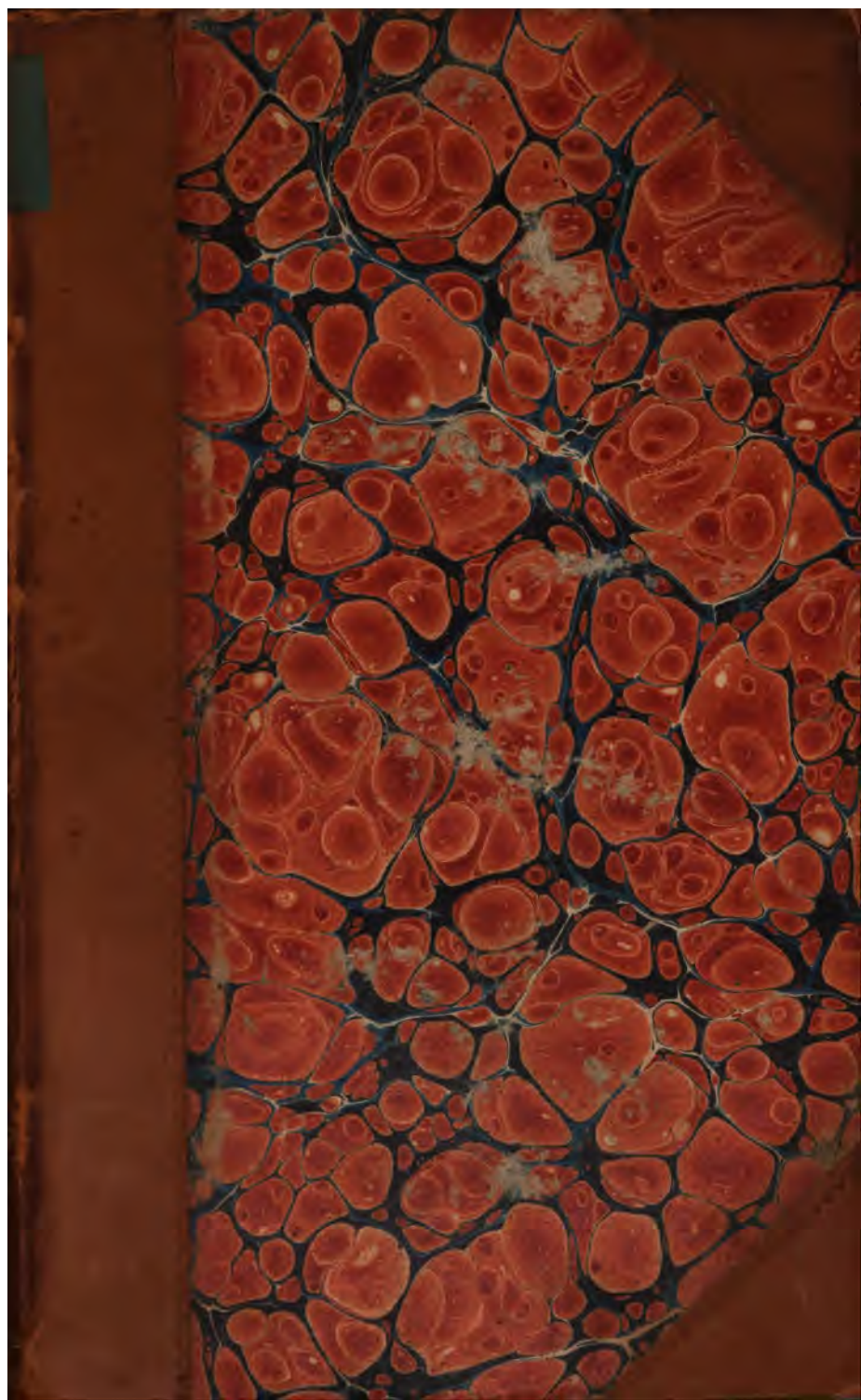
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14. 1831.

THE

STORY

OF

GINEVRA,

FROM

'ARIOSTO.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR WILLIAM MARSH,

145, OXFORD-STREET.

1831.

S.



**THE  
STORY  
OF  
GINEVRA.**

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**I.**

Of all wild animals, of all who render  
Service to man, in field and forest wide,  
We find the first respect the second gender,  
The male refuse to hurt the female's hide.  
Bears in the wood to bearesses are tender,  
And lionesses lions couch beside;  
She-wolves by he-wolves sleep when they are full,  
And heifers are not frightened at the bull.



## II.

What fury, O Mankind ! hath come to you ?

O Womankind ! from whence proceed your fears ?

What fiend hath tried what mischief he could do,

In setting both together by the ears ?

Made many lovely faces black and blue,

Bathed many genial marriage-beds with tears ;

Nor bathed them only with the watery flood

Of woman's tears, but bathed them oft with blood.

## III.

They seem to me to err from nature's course,

And to rebel against the Lord of life,

Who strike fair woman's face, or break or force

One hair from off her head in heat of strife ;

But to give poison to her, or divorce

Body from soul by halter or by knife—

Can men do this ? I think that he who can,

Must be some devil in the shape of man.

## IV.

And such I should suppose the ruffians were,  
Whom bold Rinaldo, through the forest riding,  
Had quickly driven from off the damsel fair,  
After his ears had caught her cries and chiding.  
And now she told him what had brought her there,  
To such a lonely place, so fit for hiding  
Whate'er the devil, or man with vices laden,  
Might undertake against a helpless maiden.

## V.

And while they rode along, the knight perused  
At leisure her who sat behind his squire ;  
And saw that she was graceful, though confused,  
As were her manners too, and her attire ;  
Her speech was that of one who had been used  
To speak with those of knightly rank, or higher ;  
Her frame still trembled, and her cheek was pale  
With recent fear, as she began her tale.

## VI.

“ Sir Knight,” she said, “before ourselves we sever,  
Thou’lt hear more barbarous actions than were  
In Thebes, in Argos, or Mycene ever, [done  
Or place more cruel, if there should be one;  
And if the natives of these regions never,  
Or, at the most, but seldom see the sun,  
It is because the sun doth hate to see  
Such people and such acts of cruelty.

## VII.

“ To slay their enemies, as histories tell,  
Men of all times and countries are agreed ;  
But to slay those who love and wish them well—  
This is too impious and unjust indeed !  
From the beginning now I’ll lightly dwell  
On every cause of which my tale hath need,  
To show why these against all right did mean  
To murder me while yet my years are green.

## VIII.

“ Then know, thy seryant served when she was  
young

A maid whose father ruleth o’er this nation ;  
And while with her to womanhood I sprung,  
I held a good and honoured situation ;  
Till Love, with envy and unkindness stung,  
Effected, woe is me ! my subjugation,  
And of all knights and squires of each degree,  
Made me prefer the Duke of Albany.

## IX.

“ The Duke pretended that he loved me well—  
And I loved him no less, but rather more ;  
And oh ! of passion lips can sweetly tell,  
Although the heart be hollow at the core.  
I let him thus go on, till that befell  
Which never had befallen me before ;  
And I observed not that just then we were  
In the bed-chamber of my mistress fair ;

## X.

" Ginevra's favourite and most private room,  
 In which she kept the things she held the dearest,  
 And oftenest slept while flowers were fresh in bloom,  
 Or ere the leaves of autumn were the serest :  
 But when the heat of summer did consume  
 The flowers—or when the cold became severest—  
 She changed her bed, and gave me opportunity  
 There to receive my lover with impunity.

## XI.

" For from a window of that room extending,  
 A balcony went forth into the air,  
 By which he entered, upon my suspending  
 Steps made of cord, to serve him for a stair ;  
 And none beheld him mounting or descending,  
 Because some houses out of all repair  
 Were empty on the other side the way,  
 And no one passed them either night or day.

## XII.

" For many months, as the occasions came,  
 We thus enjoyed each other's sweet society ;  
 And every month increased the amorous flame  
 That on my vitals fed without satiety ;  
 Alas ! my lover did not feel the same,  
 But seemed to be desirous of variety :  
 Long was I blind to this, until, as stronger  
 The proofs became, I could be blind no longer.

## XIII.

" After a time, with an unblushing cheek,  
 He owned himself the fair Ginevra's suitor ;  
 And had the cool effrontery to bespeak  
 My service as a friend and coadjutor  
 In this new courtship. I was fond and weak,  
 And he knew how to turn me and to tutor ;  
 And I am ignorant even now if he  
 Thought first of her or first made love to me.

## XIV.

“ He said, indeed, that he was not her lover,  
Nor ever could be, as he had been mine ;  
To gain her hand in marriage, under cover  
Of feigned affection, was his real design ;  
And though of ladies there were none above her,  
Yet he was great, and noble in his line,  
Next to the king, who would not find a flaw,  
If she found none, in such a son-in-law.

## XV.

“ Then with much art he promised and persuaded,  
Pouring out many a vow and protestation  
Of lasting gratitude and love unfaded,  
And counting much on my co-operation ;  
Saying he'd ne'er forget the girl who aided,  
The dearest girl to him in all the nation—  
Much dearer than his royal wife would be,  
Should he obtain that wife by means of me.

## XVI.

" I who had tried, before his wish was known,  
 To work his will and contradict him never,  
 And felt contented on those days alone  
 When I succeeded in my fond endeavour—  
 I spoke of him to her so near the throne,  
 On all occasions, and I praised him ever ;  
 And brought myself to claim for my enslaver  
 Possession of the fair Ginevra's favour.

## XVII.

" I did in earnest, and with all my heart,  
 What could be done for him—and God doth know  
 But though I plotted, vain was every art ;     [it—  
 And though I laboured, no success did show it :  
 Ginevra gave him not the smallest part  
 Of her regard, but held him all below it.  
 The reason of her unconcern so steady  
 Was, her affections were engaged already



## XVIII.

“ By an Italian knight of many charms,  
 Who came to Scotland with his younger brother,  
 Courteous and handsome, and so brave in arms  
 That Britain scarce could furnish such another.  
 To him the king gave castles, villas, farms,  
 With jurisdictions, and with every other  
 Of those distinctions, liberties, and powers,  
 Enjoyed by barons in this realm of ours.

## XIX.

“ Ariodante was the stranger’s name,           [joy ;  
 Who pleased the king—but was the daughter’s  
 Because he had borne him like a knight of fame—  
 But more because he loved her like a boy.  
 Nor e’er Vesuvius burnt with such a flame,  
 Nor Etna in Sicilia, no nor Troy,  
 As now consumed (and well she knew the whole)  
 Ariodante’s very heart and soul.

## XX.

“ And since his passion was not unrequited,  
And since her love for him was warm and true,  
Since all her heart was his—at first she slighted  
Her ducal suitor, thinking that would do ;  
But teased by me, at length she fairly spited  
My favourite friend ; and from her lips I drew  
A flat denial oft, or sharp rebuke,  
And little hope or comfort for the duke.

## XXI.

“ I told my lover this, and added—‘ Sir !  
Seek out some other method of promotion ;  
For this Italian knight is sure of her,  
By the king’s leave, and thou mayst form a notion  
Of her attachment to this foreigner,  
When I declare that all the watery ocean  
Could never drown her love, or check her fire,  
Or quench one spark of her immense desire.’

## XXII.

“ Now when the duke, whose name was Polinesso,  
 Saw that Ginevra was but little kind—  
 Indeed so little she could scarce be less so ;  
 And when he learned what occupied her mind,  
 And heard me saying to him—‘ do not press so  
 On one who is to thy deserving blind :’  
 Then not regret so much as rage came o’er him,  
 To find another thus preferred before him.

## XXIII.

“ And for Ginevra and her knight, he vowed  
 To raise a quarrel of such sort between them,  
 That he and she no more should be allowed  
 To love each other as I once had seen them,—  
 O’er fair Ginevra’s fame to cast a cloud,  
 And each from each for ever more to wean them ;  
 And not a breast but his, not even mine,  
 Was made acquainted with the dark design.

## XXIV.

“ He formed his plan, and, calling me by name,  
He said, ‘ Dalinda, dearest ! thou dost know  
The root restoreth, though the axe should maim  
The tree for half-a-dozen times or so :  
And thus my perseverance is the same  
Though ill success hath often brought it low,  
And will not cease to bud and to aspire  
Till I accomplish that which I desire.

## XXV.

“ ‘ And why I set my heart upon success  
Is for the sake and pleasure of succeeding ;  
And if in fact I fail, I ne’er the less  
Would fancy otherwise, the fact unheeding.  
I pray thee, when Ginevra doth undress,  
Her evening clothes at night no longer needing,  
That thou wouldst take her royal raiment fine  
And robe withal that courtly form of thine.

## XXVI.

“ ‘Adorn thyself like her, and dress thy hair  
 As she doth hers, and seem as seemeth she  
 With thy best means,—then send the corded stair  
 Down to thy lover from the balcony.  
 I'll mount above and fancy she is there  
 Indeed, whose garments I behold on thee :  
 And thus I hope, while I myself deceive,  
 My vain regrets will shortly take their leave.’

## XXVII.

“ So spoke the duke. My feelings being sadder  
 Than I can well express, my heart being sore,  
 Prudence forsook me—if I ever had her—  
 And I obeyed. Ginevra's clothes I wore,  
 And from the balcony let down the ladder  
 By which he had mounted many times before ;  
 Nor did I see his treacherous aim, alas !  
 Till all the evil had been brought to pass.

## XXVIII.

" About this time, with purpose foul and fell,  
 The duke had drawn Ariodante near to him,  
 For they had used to be acquainted well  
 Before Ginevra made the knight less dear to him.  
 ' I wonder,' said the duke, ' what fiend of hell  
 Doth make thee hate a man, and changed appear  
 Who ever hath, despite thy wilful blindness, [to him,  
 Held thee in high respect and shown thee kindness?

## XXIX.

" ' I know for certain that full well thou knowest  
 The love Ginevra long hath borne to me,—  
 That I would wed her, being not the lowest  
 In rank or fortune, and as fond as she,—  
 Then wherefore hinderest thou my suit, and goest  
 Seeking for love in her who is not for thee ?  
 I would not cross thee, by the Power Divine !  
 If I were in thy place, and thou in mine.'

## XXX.

“ ‘ And I,’ replied Ariodante, ‘ wonder

Much more at thee, because my love is older ;  
Nay I must tell thee, to correct thy blunder,

I loved before thou even didst behold her :  
And well thou knowest nought can tear asunder  
Our hearts, or make our mutual feelings colder,  
Or make them warmer, or revoke her vows  
To be mine only—my own lawful spouse.

## XXXI.

“ ‘ Then wherefore hast not thou respect for me,  
And for our friendship, such as thou demandest  
That I should have, and which I would, for thee,

In case thy expectations were the grandest ?  
The princess, as I hope, my wife shall be. [standest—

Though thou art rich, on lower ground thou  
To me the king’s regards are not more shady,  
And I am much more pleasing to the lady.’

## XXXII.

“ ‘ Oh !’ said the duke to him, ‘ a great mistake  
 Is this to which thy foolish love is tending ;  
 Thou thinkest of her favour to partake  
 More than myself, but we shall see the ending.  
 Only be candid, for our mutual sake,  
 And I will be what I am recommending ;  
 Then let the weaker yield unto the other,  
 Resign this mistress, and seek out another.

## XXXIII.

“ ‘ I promise, on the honour of a lord,  
 To keep my tongue, as with a bit and bridle,  
 From blabbing aught—a thing to be abhorred  
 By both of us as mischievous and idle.’  
 Then swore they secrecy with one accord,  
 Placing their hands upon the Holy Bible ;  
 And after this, which was the duke’s suggestion,  
 Ariodante entered on the question,



## XXXIV.

“ And told, in honesty the truth inditing,  
How that his hopes were any thing but dim ;  
He had it from her lips, and in her writing,  
That fair Ginevra was engaged to him.  
Should aught befall to hinder their uniting,  
Should contradiction be her parent’s whim,  
She promised, by no future passion fired,  
To live and die unwedded and retired.

## XXXV.

“ The king, his gracious and most kind signore,  
Had been beholden to his strength in arms.  
He would maintain the royal power and glory,  
And thus look forward, with but few alarms,  
And many hopes, before his hairs were hoary,  
To be rewarded by Geneva’s charms,  
On showing to the king that such a measure,  
Which paid the knight, would be the maiden’s  
pleasure.

## XXXVI.

“ ‘ Then here I am,’ he said, ‘ and I consider  
 My chance of prospering to be not ideal ;  
 I for such fortune am the fairest bidder,  
 And want no sign more positive and real ;  
 And, though the power were mine, I would not  
 Of aught, except by license hymeneal ; [rid her  
 And, as it is, such trial were but vain,  
 For she is good and virtuous in the grain.’

## XXXVII.

“ So spoke Ariodante of his wiving,  
 And spoke in plainness, without fraud or cover.  
 Then Polinesso, who had been contriving  
 To make Ginevra hateful to her lover,  
 Began, and said—‘ Thou fanciest thou art thriving,  
 Thou fittest on thy fortune like a glover,  
 But I will take the bandage from thine eyes,  
 And make thy tongue confess thy wrong surmise.

## XXXVIII.

“ ‘ She doth cajole thee whom she loveth not,  
She feedeth thee on words and expectations,  
In seeret, too, she calleth thee a sot,  
Laughing with me at thy imaginations.  
But I assurances more sure have got  
Than promises and false insinuations,  
And, though I should not, I will mention those,  
Between ourselves, and underneath the rose.

## XXXIX.

“ ‘ There passeth by no month without my spending  
Three nights, or four, or six, or sometimes ten,  
Upon her breast, within her arms, and blending  
My soul with hers, as love hath taught to men.  
Compare our luck, and cease from thy pretending—  
No more my rival, be my friend agen—  
To thy superior yield the prize, and see  
If other maids may prove more kind to thee.’

## XL.

“ ‘ I know,’ replied Arlodante, furious,  
 ‘ I know, and I am certain, that thou liest :  
 This composition is thy own, and spurious,  
 By which to frighten me away thou triest ;  
 But since to her ’tis greatly too injurious,  
 Thou must maintain thy story, or thou diest ;  
 For by my soul, which now is all on fire,  
 I’ll prove thee traitor as I call thee liar !’

## XLI.

“ The duke made answer—‘ it would not be fair  
 That we for proofs should combat man to man,  
 When I before thine eyes will lay them bare,  
 And let thy love deny them, if it can.’  
 Dismay was in Arlodante’s air,  
 And through his bones a chilly tremor ran,  
 And life appeared to leave him, and he knew  
 Death was not distant if these things were true.

## XLII.

" With a heart wounded, and a pallid face,  
 With trembling voice, and eyes grown large with  
 He said, ' inform me of the time and place [staring,  
 To witness this thy strange successful daring,  
 And I engage to leave that lady's chase,  
 To thee so liberal, to me so sparing :  
 But I must have the proofs as antecedents,  
 And see her errors, ere I yield thee credence.'

## XLIII.

" ' When time shall serve I will indulge thy sight,'  
 Said Polinesso ; and away went he.  
 Soon after this, I think the second night,  
 It was arranged the duke should come to me.  
 That evening, all his snares being laid aright,  
 He pointed out the secret balcony  
 And ruined houses to his friend so dear,  
 And said ' conceal thyself at midnight here.'

## XLIV,

“ Ariodante marked them, and suspected,  
From their appearance and their situation,  
That his intriguing rival had selected  
The place as proper for assassination,  
Under pretence that *there* should be detected  
What from Ginevra’s virtuous conversation  
And virtuous bearing, he conceived to be  
An absolute impossibility.

## XLV.

“ He thought about it, and resolved to go,  
Nor yield to what, perchance, were false alarms,  
At the same time to be attended so  
As to be safe from meditated harms.  
He had a brother named Lurcanio,  
The most distinguished of the court in arms,  
Prudent as well, and stout of heart and limb,  
And worth ten other men to stand by him.

## XLVI.

“ Ariodante, calling him aside,  
 Said ‘ Arm thyself to-night, and see thou smother  
 Each curious wish, for I will not confide  
 The secret unto thee or any other.’  
 He brought him near to where he meant to hide—  
 ‘ If I should call, advance,’ he said, ‘ my brother !  
 But till thou hearest that I call on thee,  
 Stir not from hence, if thou hast love for me.’

## XLVII.

“ ‘ Go, doubt me not,’ replied Lurcanio then ;  
 And thus unto an empty house came he,  
 And, couching in his solitary den,  
 He bent his eyes upon my balcony.  
 Next came the falsest and the worst of men,  
 So glad to cause Ginevra’s infamy,  
 And made his usual sign to call out one  
 Who little dreamed what ill would thus be done.

## XLVIII.

“ And I, in white and ornamented clo'es,  
Striped in the midst and all about with gold,  
While tassels hung, in colour like the rose,  
From golden net-work round my temples rolled—  
Which fashion for herself Ginevra chose,  
And as for copying her, none made so bold,—  
I heard the signal, threw the window wide,  
And came forth, visible on every side.

## XLIX.

“ Meanwhile Lurcanio, who began to tire,  
Or feared, perhaps, his brother was in danger,  
Or else was prompted by the old desire  
To spy out that to which he was a stranger,  
Keeping the shade, had still been drawing nigher,  
As stealeth on the deer the forest ranger,  
Until the elder and the younger brother  
Were now within ten paces of each other.



## L.

“ Unknowing all, I came upon the scene  
 In bright apparel, as I said before.  
 My part, with no bad consequence, had been  
 Already acted once, or twice, or more.  
 They took me for the princess, well I ween,  
 For moonlight fell upon the clothes I wore ;  
 Nor did Ginevra really disagree  
 In face or person very much with me.

## LI.

“ The distance, too, at which the ruins were  
 From the apartment of the royal maid,  
 Favoured the fraud ; and to the brothers there  
 The duke did thus more easily persuade  
 That which was false. Think now what deep des-  
 What grief upon Ariodante weighed, [pair,  
 When he beheld me let the ladder fall,  
 And Polinesso scale the palace-wall.

## LII,

“ Soon as I could, not thinking there were spies,  
 I cast my arms about his neck for greeting ;  
 I kissed him on the lips, the cheeks, the eyes,  
 As I was used to do at every meeting ;  
 Beyond his wont he made me kind replies,  
 His kisses and caresses oft repeating.  
 The other, with a heart all torn and bleeding,  
 Stood afar off, and looked on this proceeding.

## LIII.

“ And fell, withal, into so great a sorrow,  
 That on the instant he resolved to die,  
 Nor ever see the miserable morrow ;  
 And so his bright sword drew he from his thigh,  
 Grounded the hilt, and then leaned back to borrow  
 Strength for the plunge—when young Lurcanio’s  
     eye  
 (Which had observed us both, but could not see  
 Who the man was that mounted up to me)

## LIV.

" Caught now the action and the glancing blade,  
 And he himself rushed on to interfere,  
 And stay the sacrifice, which had been made,  
 He being later, or not quite so near.  
 'Ah, brother !' cried he, 'hath thy reason strayed ?  
 Should love for woman bring thee to thy bier,  
 When women all are lighter and more frail  
 Than cloud or mist that flieth from the gale ?

## LV.

" Cause her to die who ought to live no more,  
 But keep thy own death for thy greater fame ;  
 She may have been loved tenderly before  
 Her fraud was known, and lost was her good  
 Let scorn now lie with hatred at her door, [name ;  
 Since now thy very eyes have seen her shame ;  
 And run not on thy sword, but keep it rather  
 To prove this harlot such before her father.'

## LVI.

“ Ariodante, at his brother’s crying,  
Refrained from what he was about to do,  
But still the comfort he should find in dying  
Rose like a welcome vision to his view.  
And almost suffocated now with sighing,  
Not pricked in heart, but pierced entirely through,  
He yet pretended that his fit was over,  
And turned him homeward—soon to be a rover.

## LVII.

“ He left his home betimes the following morn,  
Without a word to any person there,  
And entered on his journey most forlorn,  
With nothing to direct him but despair.  
Excepting two, no soul of woman born  
Suspected wherefore he was gone or where.  
Throughout the palace and all Scotland flew  
Various conjectures of what no one knew.

## LVIII.

“ After a week or more had passed at court,  
A traveller before Ginevra came,  
And looked as if he brought some sad report,  
And then pronounced Ariodante’s name.  
The knight was drowned—but not in ocean’s sport,  
Nor was rude Boreas, or his mates, to blame—  
For from a rock that overhung the wave  
He had thrown himself into his watery grave.

## LIX.

“ The traveller said, ‘ he met me by the way,  
And thus addressed me, “ turn, I pray thee fair,  
That thou mayst witness, and hereafter say  
Unto Ginevra what my fortunes were.  
Tell her, Ariodante died this day,  
And for the reason that I now declare—  
Because he saw what he should not have seen.  
Had I been blind, Ah, happier I had been !”

## LX.

" ' It chanced we were upon a head of land  
 Which stretcheth out above the Irish Sea.  
 He spoke, and from the spot where he did stand  
 Plunged headlong down, and disappeared to me :  
 I left him there, and following his command,  
 Am come in haste to bear this news to thee.'  
 Ginevra heard, and fell, and seeming dead,  
 Was by her maidens borne unto her bed.

## LXI.

" Oh God ! what did she when they all retreating  
 Left her alive, alone ? what said she there ?  
 She tore her robe, her lovely bosom beating,  
 And did much damage to her golden hair ;  
 Full many a time those latest words repeating,  
 In which the knight assigned his cause of care,  
 And reason of his early death, to have been  
 That his eyes saw what they should not have seen.

## LXII.

“ From mouth to mouth now ran a woeful cry,  
As fast as rumour spread the tale of woe ;  
For this, the king’s own visage was not dry,  
Nor that of knight or dame, of high or low :  
But most Lurcanio did lament and sigh,  
And grieved in heart, and was afflicted so  
As to be almost tempted by his pain  
To die himself, and join the dead again.

## LXIII.

“ And while the thought would ever make intrusion,  
How that Ginevra and her baseness only  
Had brought about this tragical conclusion,  
And left him wretched, brotherless, and lonely,  
His passions fell into such great confusion,  
He went to work out his revenge so pronely,  
That he esteemed it an indifferent thing  
To incur the hate of country and of king.

## LXIV.

“ And to the royal presence, when the hall  
 Was filled with company, he forward came,  
 And said, ‘ O King ! my brother’s death was all  
 Thy daughter’s fault, who well deserveth blame.  
 He lost his reason when he saw her fall  
 From virtue’s semblance into vice and shame ;  
 It then appeared to his disordered mind  
 That loss of life was gain, stern death was kind.

## LXV.

“ ‘ Lovers they were—he hoped that every bar  
 To their connexion would give way before them :  
 His wishes were what true love’s wishes are—  
 Why should I seek to throw concealment o’er  
 But while he stood to scent the leaves afar, [them ?  
 He saw another climb the tree that bore them ;  
 Climb what he thought a tree reserved with care—  
 Gather its fruits, and taste its flavour there.’



## LXVI.

“ Then told Lurcanio how a ladder thrown  
By fair Ginevra's hands to one below  
A balcony whereon she stood alone  
Helped a man up, whose name he did not know ;  
For he had changed his clothes to be unknown,  
And hid his hair to be incognito.  
Lurcanio added, as a knight should do,  
That he would fight to prove his story true.

## LXVII.

“ Thou mayst imagine if the father grieved  
When such a charge was made against the  
daughter ;  
For first, he would not ever have conceived  
This thing himself, so good and chaste he thought  
And secondly, his anxious bosom heaved [her ;  
Because he knew that if no aid were brought her,  
By which Lurcanio might be shown to lie,  
He must condemn his darling child to die.

## LXVIII.

I cannot, Sir ! suppose unknown to thee  
Our law by which is forfeited the life  
Of dame or damsel who is said to be  
Either no virgin or no virtuous wife ;  
Unless within some thirty days and three  
Her champion should engage in mortal strife,  
And prove that he who said so did abuse her,  
By proving stronger than her base accuser.

## LXIX.

“ Her hand in marriage, with an ample dower,  
The king hath promised in a proclamation,  
To any knight who shall have will and power  
To clear his daughter of the accusation :  
But up, I fear me, to the present hour,  
No warrior doth accept the invitation ;  
For this Lurcanio is in arms so grim,  
That all appear to be afraid of him.

## LXX.

“ And now Zerbino, the king’s son and heir,  
Is far off wandering in a foreign clime,  
Showing his knightly prowess here and there—  
If he could know, and could return in time,  
Her brother would defend his sister fair,  
All guiltless as she is of every crime :  
But many months have passed away since he,  
For her misfortune, crossed the great rough sea.

## LXXI.

“ The king desirous, ere the term was ended,  
To learn by other means than battle fray  
Whether the charge was true, or but intended  
Falsely to take his daughter’s life away,  
Caused some who served her to be apprehended,  
Meaning to hear what they might have to say ;  
Whence I foresaw sufficient to awaken  
Fears for the duke and me, if I were taken.

## LXXII.

“ And that same night I got me out beyond  
The palace walls, and for the duke enquired,  
And soon convinced him that I must abscond,  
As both were compromised if aught transpired :  
He praised my care, and bade me not despond,  
And then proposed to me a place retired—  
A castle of his own, where I might hide me,  
To which two trusty men of his should guide me.

## LXXIII.

“ Sir ! thou hast heard how I was the abettor  
Of Polinesso’s pleasure most sincerely ;  
And if he was or not my bounden debtor  
For my good offices thou seest clearly.  
Now hear what guerdon gave me this forgetter—  
See my reward for having loved him dearly ;  
And judge if woman, for love failing never,  
Can in return expect affection ever.

## LXXIV.

“ For he, ungrateful, cruel, and perfidious,  
 Conceived suspicion, after all, of me ;  
 And feared I should reveal his frauds insidious  
 At the long run, and caught the fox would be—  
 He therefore purposed to a death most hideous  
 To send me straight, for his security ;  
 Feigning to send me where I safe might stay  
 Till the king’s anger should have died away.

## LXXV.

“ He gave a secret order to the guide  
 To murder me in yonder gloomy dell—  
 For all my faith, so long and often tried !  
 And it had been performed as he did tell,  
 If thou hadst not been near me when I cried :  
 See there how Love doth treat his followers well !”  
 Thus, as they journeyed onwards to their inn,  
 Dalinda spoke unto the paladin :

## LXXVI.

To whom, of all adventures he had known,  
The last adventure was the most delightful;  
In which he saved the damsel who had shown  
Ginevra's innocence, and proved how rightful  
Her cause became, not pitiable alone,  
When she was menaced with a thing so frightful  
As dying by the Scottish law's decree,  
A victim to atrocious calumny.

## LXXVII.

The bold Rinaldo, wandering from his home  
Of Montalbano, where his lordship lay,  
Urged by "the passion and the power to roam,"  
Had ridden here and there through France the  
gay;  
And when the sea was rough and white with foam,  
He changed the bridle for the watery way,  
And—though they told him he could not get over,  
Embarked at Calais and set sail for Dover.

## LXXVIII.

"The storm is gathering !" did the sailors cry ;  
 The knight exclaimed, "well, never mind the  
 The wind was angry at the knight's reply, [storm !"  
 Being of a temper very quick and warm ;  
 And straight he raised his threatening roar on high,  
 And stirred up Ocean to assist and form,  
 With waves that o'er the mast-head flung their  
 An opposition to this child of clay. [spray,

## LXXIX.

Then took in sail the panic-stricken crew,  
 The helmsman turned the helm, and fain would  
 Directly back the very port unto [flee  
 Whence in an evil hour they put to sea.  
 "No," said the wind, "I now have hold of you  
 Who lately thought with much contempt of me ;  
 And now, on pain of shipwreck, you shall go  
 In the direction that I choose to blow."

## LXXX.

And thus they ran for several nights and days,  
Driven about, the furious gale before ;  
By turns the eastern and the western ways  
Carried them on ; at last their course they wore  
To one of Caledonia's welcome bays,  
With Caledonia's forest on the shore,  
Where oft are heard the arms of knight who roves  
Through the umbrageous ancient oaken groves.

## LXXXI.

There go the masters of the sword and spear,  
From all Great Britain and beyond the sea,  
From distant places and from places near,  
From France, from Norway, and from Germany.  
Those only go whose hearts are free from fear,  
Since not from danger is the forest free ;  
Therein of yore great things performed Tristano,  
Galasso, Lancillotto, and Galvano ;



## LXXXII.

And knights of other nations and degrees,  
Both of the old and of the new round-table ;  
And glorious records still remain of these,  
In monument, in trophy, and in fable.  
Rinaldo, glad to see the waving trees,  
Got on dry land as soon as he was able ;  
Directing that the vessel should repair  
To Berwick with the rest, and wait him there.

## LXXXIII.

Without companions, and without a squire,  
But with his horse Baiardo and his arms,  
He galloped through the forest, to enquire  
For strange adventures, which for him had  
    charms.  
The first day's riding brought him to the spire  
Of a rich abbey, owning many farms ;  
And knight, or lady, there was sure to be  
Received with bounteous hospitality.

## LXXXIV.

And well the abbot and each holy brother  
 Received Rinaldo ; and the noble knight  
 (As soon as ever, by some means or other,  
 He had appeased a powerful appetite)  
 Demanded first of one and then of t'other,  
 (Since he had equal stomach for a fight)  
 In what wild district of the country round  
 Greatest and most adventures might be found.

## LXXXV.

They answered him that wandering up and down  
 Through the deep woods he might a number find,  
 But like enough to bring him no renown,  
 Being, with the scenery, of a sombre kind.  
 " Fight rather," said the abbot, " in a town  
 Not far from where thou hast so poorly dined ;  
 Aye, fight for something more, if thou art wise,  
 Than the mere danger or the exercise.

## LXXXVI.

“ *There* is the Scottish court, and in its view  
 The worthiest action is prepared for thee  
 That in the ancient age, or in the new,  
 Was ever laid before knight-errantry.  
 The daughter of our king doth need a true  
 And valiant knight, who will her champion be,  
 To guard her life and fame by word and blow  
 Against a baron called Lurcanio.

## LXXXVII.

“ Who hath accused Ginevra to her sire,  
 (Perhaps to gratify some angry feeling)  
 Of having met, with marks of fond desire,  
 A man by night into her chamber stealing.  
 The Scottish law will doom her to the fire,  
 Unless to some good champion’s lance appealing  
 She can disprove it, and be thus defended  
 Within a month, which shortly will be ended.

## LXXXVIII.

"He if successful will obtain great store  
 Of wealth, and honour, above all things dear.  
 An enterprize like this should please thee more  
 Than to go wandering through our woodlands  
 Besides, by knighthood thou art bounden o'er [here.  
 To rescue her who did and doth appear,  
 At least is commonly believed to be  
 A perfect paragon of modesty."

## LXXXIX.

Rinaldo pondered for a little while,  
 And then replied—"so some one made a rule  
 To burn the damsel who is said to smile  
 When her warm lover would his passion cool.  
 Cursed be he who thus disgraced your isle!  
 He was unjust, or else he was a fool.  
 Give me a guide, and I will soon repair  
 To this same town, and save Ginevra there.

## XC.

" I will not say that she did not connive  
 With him who at her chamber window met her ;  
 But I will say that to be burnt alive  
 She doth not merit, and I will not let her ;  
 And I will add, your lawyers should contrive  
 To have this law revoked, and make a better :  
 Pity it were to scorch one charming limb !"  
 The abbot and the monks agreed with him.

## XCI.

Soon as Aurora with her golden keys  
 Opened the horizon on the following day,  
 Rinaldo started from his bed of ease,  
 Took one to bear his shield and show the way,  
 Took horse and arms,—and through tremendous  
     trees  
 For many leagues and many miles went they ;  
 The knight still pressing on to make denial  
 For the sad princess, and proceed to trial.

## XCII.

In humble imitation of a bird,  
Seeking to journey as the bird would fly,  
They had left the beaten alley, when they heard  
A scream for succour very loud and high.  
One spurred Baiardo, one his poney spurred  
Into a gloomy dell, whence came the cry,  
And they beheld between two ruffians there,  
Though at some distance off, a damsel fair ;

## XCIII.

But full of grief, and bathed in tears was she,  
As much as ever damsel was, or dame.  
Two by her side, to whom she bent her knee,  
Whom she besought for pity and for shame  
To spare her life, unmoved appeared to be  
And hard of hearing, till Rinaldo came [ground,  
Thundering and threatening as he cleared the  
When all at once their ears and legs they found,

## XCIV.

And turned their backs, and fled like murderers vile  
To where the dell more dark and tangled grew.  
The knight esteemed it scarcely worth his while  
To follow them, which had been hard to do,  
But asked the lady in a courteous style  
What fault of her's on her this judgment drew ;  
And to save time, and that she might not tire,  
He mounted her behind his guide and squire.

## XCV.

And then Dalinda—for you all have guessed,  
And rightly guessed, that no one else was she—  
Dalinda then her fluttering self addressed  
To him who asked her of her history.  
And if the knight had been before possessed  
By soft compassion in no small degree,  
In a much greater now he felt the same  
For fair Ginevra—fair of face and fame.

## XCVI.

And towards the city of St. Andrew then,  
Where Scotland's king with Scotland's court  
was staying,  
And where the single combat in their ken  
Was to be fought, as I was lately saying,  
Rinaldo, one of the most bold of men,  
Went quickly on without at all delaying,  
Until its churches and its towers were seen  
From where he rode, with some few miles between.

## XCVII.

And near the walls he met a squire who told him  
That a strange knight had taken up the affair,  
Who came with so much mystery to enfold him  
That who he was no herald could declare ;  
And no one had been able to behold him,  
At least his face, since his arrival there ;  
And even the squire, his own attendant, swore  
He did not know what name his master bore.



## XCVIII.

They reached the city-gate. Dalinda here  
Observed *that* city was no place for her ;  
Yet she consented soon to wave her fear,  
So well Rinaldo played the comforter.  
The gate was closed—he called the keeper near,  
And said to him, “ why this precaution, sir ? ”  
And heard that all were gone to view the fight  
Between Lurcanio and the stranger knight,

## XCIX.

And had been absent many since the dawn,  
Far from that quarter, in another one  
Where was a level and a spacious lawn,  
And where the sport already had begun.  
For Montalbano's lord was then withdrawn  
The bolt—then back into the socket run.  
Hurrying through empty streets, he made a din,  
But left the damsel at the nearest inn ;

## C.

And told her she might there remain secure  
 Till he returned, which he would shortly do.  
 Then to the field, as falcon to its lure,  
 He darted onwards, where the warriors two  
 Persisted to give blows and to endure ;—  
 Lurcanio still his vengeance did pursue  
 Against Ginevra, while the other's arm [harm.  
 Wrought well to guard that favourite maid from

## CI.

Six knights were in the lists, armed cap-à-pè,  
 Except that none of them had spear or steed,  
 But with them was the Duke of Albany,  
 Upon a powerful charger of high breed.  
 Grand constable of Scotland then was he,  
 And kept the ground, as custom had decreed :  
 And to see danger at Ginevra staring  
 Made glad his heart, and haughtier made his bearing.

## CII.

Baiardo the good horse began to clear  
 A passage through the gazing crowd, and they  
 Who heard him like a tempest in their rear,  
 Were neither lame nor slow to move away.  
 High on his back Rinaldo did appear,  
 The flower of gallant knights who graced that day;  
 And passing through a long and motley train,  
 In front of the king's seat he drew his rein ;

## CIII.

And said, while many bent to overhear,  
 " Great King ! be further strife forbid by thee ;  
 For know that, if thou wilt not interfere,  
 Whichever dieth, dieth wrongfully.  
 One, in the dark, doth think the case is clear,  
 His words are false, though true their utterer be,  
 For a mistake is young Lurcanio's guide,  
 The same through which Arlodante died.

## CIV.

“ The other is a resolute exchanger  
Of blows and thrusts, without well knowing why,  
Except that every good and noble stranger  
Would lose his life that beauty should not die.  
Safety I bring to innocence in danger,  
Death to triumphant treachery bring I.  
But first of all, for God’s sake, part the fray,  
Then audience give to what I have to say.”

## CV.

Rinaldo spoke with such a lofty air,  
And raised such hopes of what he came to bring,  
And looked so bold, that solely at his prayer  
The fight was stayed by order of the king :  
To whom, and to the lords assembled there,  
And to the knights, and people in a ring,  
Rinaldo showed how grateful ought to be  
The princess to the Duke of Albany.

## CVI.

He offered next to fight, by way of proof  
 That what he had affirmed was no delusion.  
 The duke, who hitherto had kept aloof,  
 Was called, and came in evident confusion,  
 And lied as if he had a cloven hoof.  
 Rinaldo said, "to come to a conclusion,  
 We both of us are armed, the field is made,  
 Why should our meeting therefore be delayed?"

## CVII.

Oh! how the king and how his subjects near  
 Wished that Ginevra might unspotted be!  
 All hoped and trusted God would make it clear  
 That she was slandered undeservedly.  
 Cruel, ungenerous, proud for even a peer,  
 Was Polinesso, fond of fraud was he—  
 That such a man such treason should arrange  
 Was thought no miracle, nor very strange.

## CVIII.

And now he sate and sadly looked around,  
 As if aware his lies would nought avail ;  
 And at the thrice-repeated trumpet sound,  
 His lance was couched, his cheek was deadly pale.  
 Rinaldo tried if passage could be found [mail—  
 For his good spear through shield, and plate, and  
 Through these and through the duke it made its way,  
 Settling at once the fortune of the day.

## CIX.

Fixed in his breast, to earth the duke it bore,  
 Far from his horse at least six paces good.  
 Rinaldo sprang from saddle, and before  
 His foe could rise, unlaced his iron hood :  
 But he, who had no wish to combat more,  
 And had no strength to combat, if he would,  
 For mercy asked, and in the listed ring  
 Confessed his guilt before the court and king.

## CX.

He had not told it all when voice and breath,  
Motion and life, abandoned him for aye.  
The king, who saw his daughter saved from death,  
And saved from shame on that auspicious day,  
Was happier then (as Scottish history saith)  
Than if the crown should have been torn away  
From his anointed brows, and there restored  
By bold Rinaldo's conquering lance and sword.

## CXI.

And when that champion did his helm undo,  
The king, whose eyes with age were growing dim,  
Yet recognised the knight all Europe knew,  
And raised his hands to God for sending him.  
The other knight, whose face was hid from view,  
Who was the first to peril life and limb  
In fair Ginevra's cause, had lately been  
A calm spectator of the passing scene.

## CXII.

And him the grateful monarch would persuade  
 To name his name, or let his face be bare,  
 That high rewards and honours might be paid  
 For what his brave and kind intentions were.  
 He, yielding after he had long delayed,  
 The helmet raised from his Italian hair  
 To satisfy them all, and to discover  
 Ariodante, fair Ginevra's lover !

## CXIII.

Ariodante, whom Ginevra's eyes  
 Had wept for dead—for whom Lurcanio's, too,  
 Were steeped in tears—to whom were given the  
     sighs  
 Of king, and court, and country, as his due !  
 It seemed the traveller had been telling lies  
 About his death—and yet 'twas really true  
 That from a rock a lover's leap took he,  
 And cast himself into the Irish Sea.



## CXIV.

But ofttimes death when brought within the span  
Of one in deep despair, appeareth grim,  
Which at a distance from that desperate man  
Seemed to be lovely and a friend to him.

Ariodante when half drowned began

To wish for life, and knowing how to swim,  
And being strong, with all his might and main  
He stretched his limbs, and swam to shore again.

## CXV.

And thinking that to die by his own hand

But ill became a brave man or a sage,  
He crawled along, for he could hardly stand,

Dripping and downcast to a hermitage.  
And there he lay until throughout the land

Was spread the story of his amorous rage;  
Because he wished to learn, while hid in peace,  
Ginevra's feelings on his said decease.

## CXVI.

At first he heard she had been so much grieved  
 As to have been upon the point to die ;  
 Report of this so widely was received  
 That any one being asked could make reply :  
 A different tale he sooner had believed,  
 Remembering what had passed beneath his eye.  
 And next he heard about Lurcanio's charge,  
 And how the princess was no more at large.

## CXVII.

Against his brother then he burnt with ire  
 No less than he had burnt with love for her ;  
 And called such conduct cruel to her sire,  
 Shameful in one who wore a golden spur.  
 Meanwhile 'twas said that no one did aspire  
 To save her from the executioner,  
 Because Lurcanio was so bold and strong  
 That all were slow to think him in the wrong ;

## CXVIII.

And was, though young, so prudent and so wise  
That all who knew Lurcanio were agreed,  
If he had not beheld it with his eyes,  
He would not have reported such a deed.  
From these objections to the enterprise,  
Since none would serve Ginevra at her need,  
Arlodante, in default of others,  
Thought to oppose his weapon to his brother's.

## CXIX.

“ Ah me !” he said, “ then *I* must lift the glove  
Thrown by Lurcanio—faithless yet divine !  
My death would bring me over and above  
The usual pangs, if first I looked on thine.  
Thou art even yet my lady and my love,  
Thou art the light of these sad eyes of mine,  
And, right or wrong, I feel that it must be  
My part to fight and lose my life for thee,

## CXX.

“ I know the truth of what I must deny,  
And be the consequence upon my head :  
All that I care for is, that if I die  
Thou in a short time after wilt be dead.  
One only comfort in my death have I—  
If Polinesso loved thee as he said,  
He would not leave thee to the sole good will  
Of one so injured, though so constant still ;

## CXXI.

“ And thou shalt mark how cold he could remain,  
And mark the warm devotion of another.  
And when I fall upon the battle plain,  
I shall avenge me also of my brother :  
When he too late shall find that he hath slain  
With his own hand the offspring of his mother,  
Then will Lurcanio curse himself to see  
The end of all his barbarous zeal for me.”

## CXXII.

The knight procured, when thus his fate was sealed,  
 New arms, and a new horse of noble mien.  
 Black was his suit of armour, and his shield [green.  
 Was black, and striped with yellow stripes and  
 By chance he found, and with him to the field  
 He brought a squire whom no one there had seen :  
 And thus, in secrecy and sorrow drest,  
 Entered the lists, and put his lance in rest.

## CXXIII.

What followed next you know, and in what way  
 Ariodante showed his face once more.  
 Now for the knight the king rejoiced that day  
 No less than for his daughter just before ;  
 And thought within himself that one might stray  
 For such a lover all the wide world o'er,  
 Who to defend the guilty girl, could smother  
 His sense of wrongs, and arm against his brother.

## CXXIV.

And following his own royal inclination,  
And granting both the court's and people's prayer,  
And bold Rinaldo's earnest supplication—  
To her loved knight he gave Ginevra fair.  
It pleased him also to fill up the station  
Which Polinesso lost, and to declare  
That from thenceforth his son-in-law should be  
Ariodante, Duke of Albany.

## CXXV.

Rinaldo spoke for yet a little while,  
To save Dalinda's life a second time.  
The law condemned her to the blazing pile—  
“But,” said the the king, “if she will weep her  
Far in some northern or some western isle, [crime  
And take the vail, and list the convent-chime,  
And spend her days in penitence and prayer,  
The law, I think, will not pursue her there.”

THE END.

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